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Message Text

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15
ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 L-03 DODE-00 PA-02 USIA-15 PRS-01

SP-02 AID-05 /054 W
---------- 041403
R 011320Z JUL 75
FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6860
INFO AMEMBASSY MASERU
AMEMBASSY MBABANE
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

UNCLAS GABORONE 1032

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, BC

SUBJECT: SELEBI-PIKWE AFTERMATH

REF: (A) GABORONE 1019, (B) GABORONE 1016, (C) GABORONE 1008

1. AUGUST 1 EDITION OF GOVERNMENT - PUBLISHED BOTSWANA DAILY NEWS CARRIES EXTENDED DISCUSSION OF SELEBI-PIKWE DEVELOPMENTS, WHICH PRESENT, INTER ALIA, VIEWS OF SOME OF THE STRIKERS AS WELL AS THE MINE MANAGEMENT. FOLLOWING ARE HIGHLIGHTS:

QUOTE. THOUSANDS OF JOB SEEKERS CROWDED AT THE BCL COPPER NICKEL MINE PERSONNEL OFFICES IN SELEBI-PIKWE YESTERDAY MORNING FOLLOWING TUESDAY"S STRIKE AND DISTURBANCES WHICH RESULTED IN SEVERAL PEOPLE BEING INJURED, MANY PEOPLE DETAINED BY POLICE AND SLIGHT DAMAGE TO PROPERTY.
ACCORDING TO THE BCL MANAGEMENT, SOME OF THE STRIKERS WHO ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE TAKEN PART IN THE STRIKE ONLY BECAUSE THEY WERE INTIMIDATED TO DO SO, WILL BE RE-EMPLOYED. THE MANAGEMENT SAID THOSE EMPLOYED WILL START WORK TODAY. THE
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EMPLOYING PERIOD WILL LAST FOR ABOUT THREE DAYS...

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THE MANAGEMENT SAID SOME OF THE WORKERS HAD 'BY THEIR ACTION TERMINATED THEIR SERVICES,' ADDING THAT THE MANAGEMENT HAD FULL SUPPORT FROM THE GOVERNMENT ON THIS POINT. THE GENERAL MANAGER OF BCL, E.T. PINKNEY TOLD REPORTERS IN SELEBI-PIKWE THAT 'IT WAS NOT A STRIKE BUT A RIOT. THE LABOFFICERS AND GOVERNMENT MINISTERS WHO WERE HERE AGREED WITH US,' HE SAID, EMPHASISING, IT IS NOT A JOKE.
THE MANAGEMENT INDICATED THAT THOSE EMPLOYEES WITH A GOOD DISCIPLINARY RECORD WOULD BE REINSTATED.
MOST OFTHE STRIKERS WHO WERE AMONG THE JOB SEEKING CROWD AT THE OFFICES OF THE BCL TOLD REPORTERS THAT THEY HAD NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO ASK THE MAPGEMENT TO RE-EMPLOY THEM BECAUSE THEY FEEL THEY HAVE BEEN 'ABANDONED BY GOVERNMENT.'
THEY SAID THAT WITHOUT EMPLOYMENT 'OUR FAMILIES WILL STARVE AND WE WILL LOSE ACCOMMODATION.' THEY ADDED THAT THEY WERE DISTURBED TO LEARN THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS BACKING WHOLE-HEARTEDLY THE MANAGEMENT OF BCL.
SOME OF THEM COMPLAINED ABOUT WHAT THEY CALLED 'ILL TREATMENT OF LOCALS BY FOREIGNERS' AT THE MINE, AND CLAIMED THAT THEY ARE FIGHTING FOR THE SAME CAUSE - A GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP AND FAIR WAGES.

IN A MEETING TWO WEEKS AGO THE WORKERS BLAMED THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT CLAIMING, 'THEY (LABOUR OFFICIALS) COME TO US ONLY WHEN THERE IS CRISIS. NOBODY BOTHERS TO KNOW OUR PROBLEMS UNTIL WE DEMONSTRATE AFTER A LONG IRRITATION,' THEY SAID.
A LOT OF FRUSTRATION HAS BEEN IMPOSED ON THEM BY THE MANAGE-MENT, THEY SAID, PARTICULARLY THOSE CONSIDERED INTELLIGENT ENOUGH TO DO TECHNICAL JOBS UNSUPERVISED, AND THOSE WHO HAVE THE APTITUDE ARE THE MOST OPPRESSED.
ON THE OTHER HAND THE MANAGEMENT CLAIMS THAT THERE IS NOT AN ENTERPRISE IN THIS COUNTRY THAT CAN TRAIN ITS PERSONNEL LIKE THE BCL.
SEVENTY SEVEN OF THE STRIKERS ARE STILL HELD IN DETENTION IN CONNECTION WITH STRIKE, ACCORDING TO POLICE SOURCES IN SELEBI-PIKWE. END QUOTE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: WAGES, MINING, PRESS COMMENTS, LABOR STRIKES, CIVIL DISORDERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975GABORO01032
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750267-0119
From: GABORONE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750792/aaaadetg.tel
Line Count: 98
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 GABORONE 1019, 75 GABORONE 1016, 75 GABORONE 1008
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31 MAR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <31 MAR 2003 by ThomasVJ>; APPROVED <17 MAR 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
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Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SELEBI-PIKWE AFTERMATH
TAGS: ELAB, BC
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006